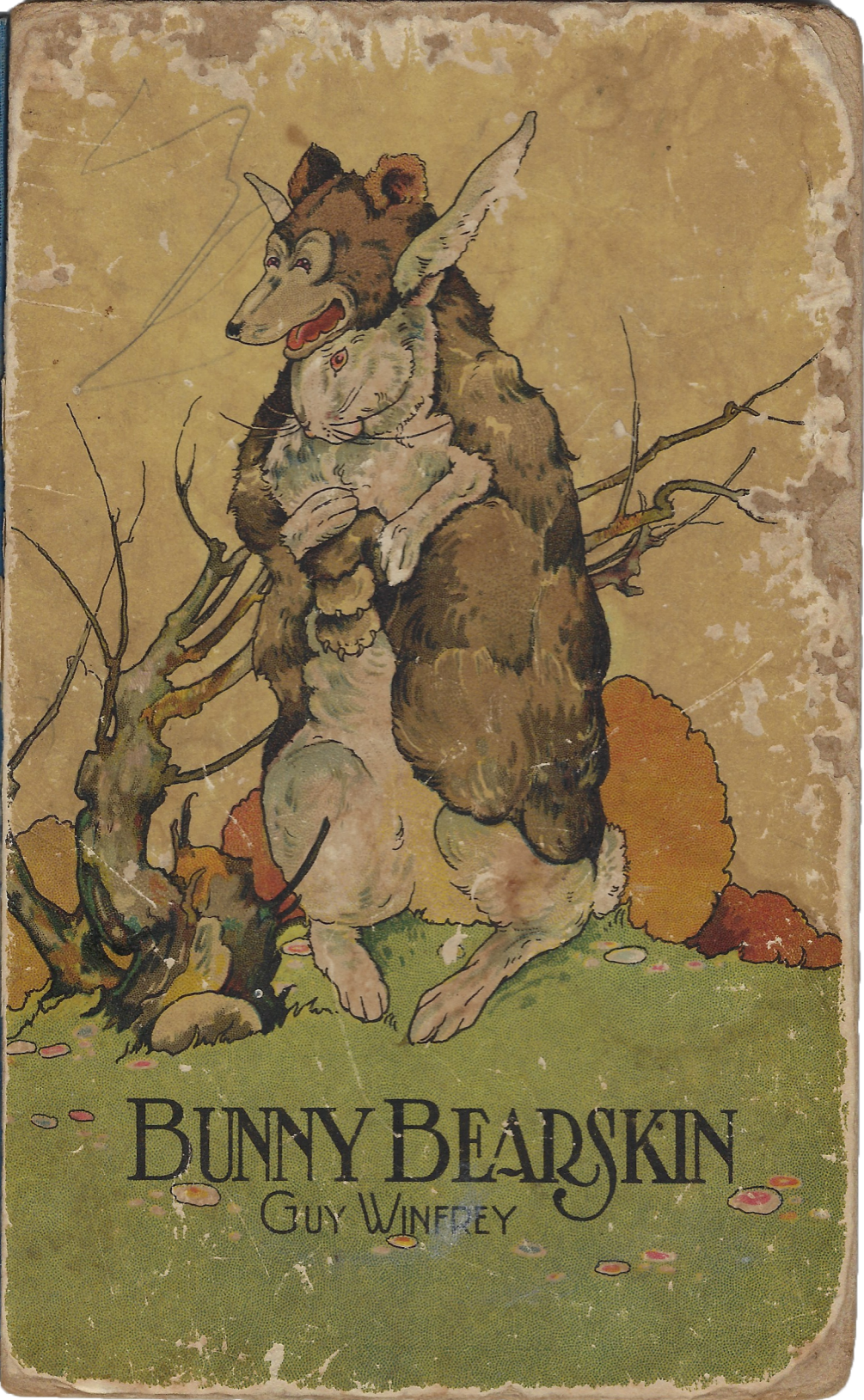
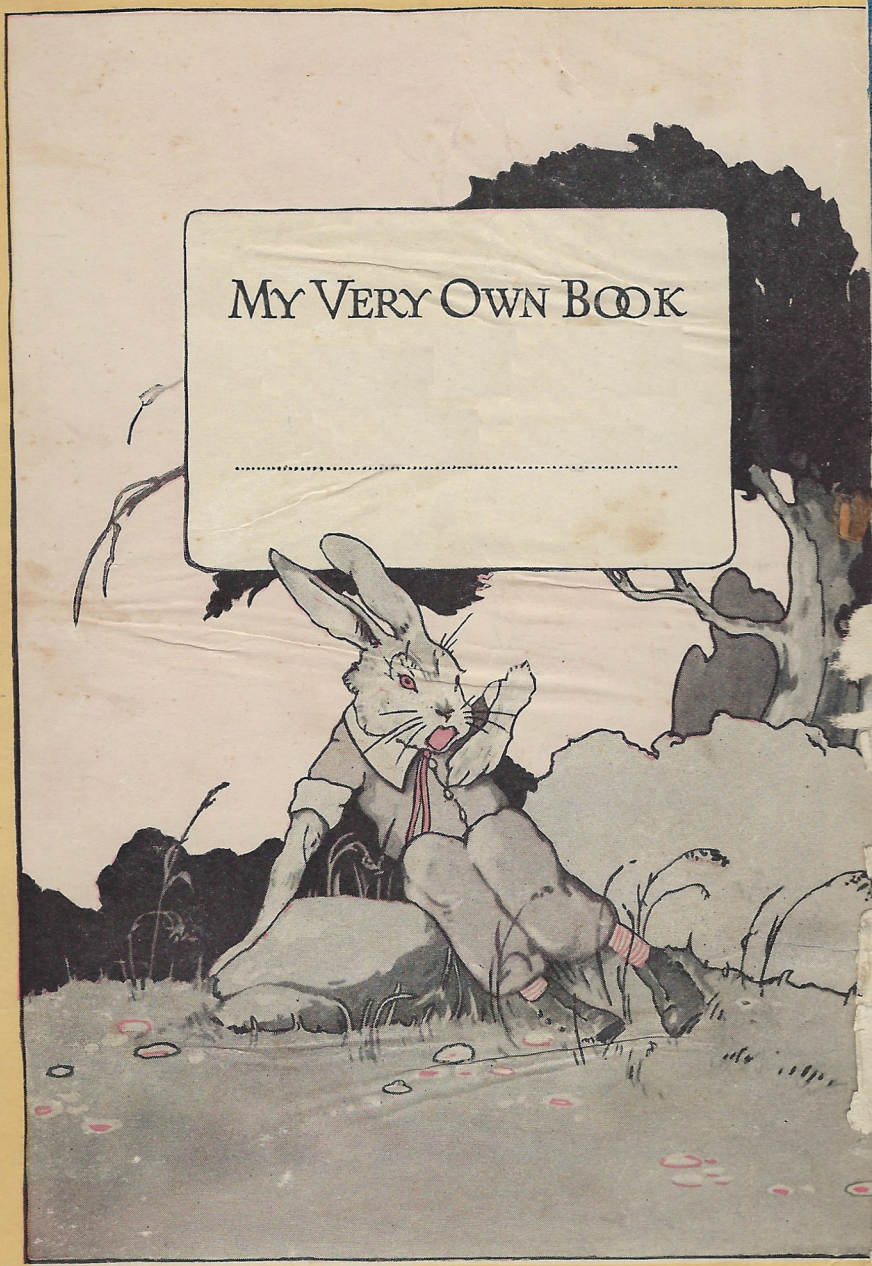

BUNNY BEARSKIN
GUY WINFREY



BUNNY

BUNNY BEARSKIN

Written by

GUY WINFREY

Illustrated by

LOUISE D. TESSIN

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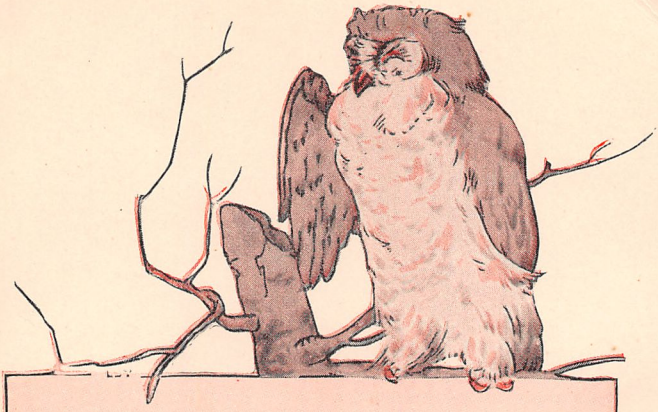
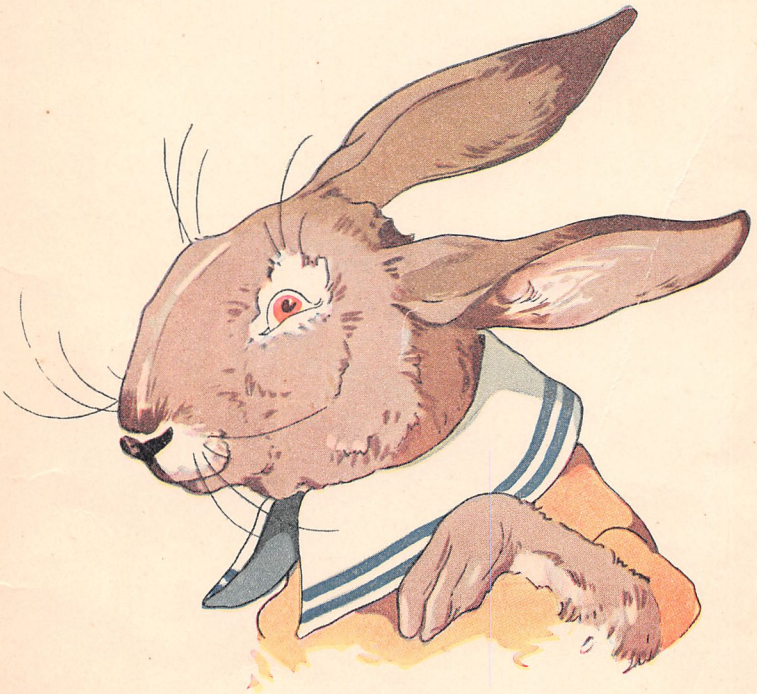


To Eleanor, Louise,
Priscilla, Elizabeth,
Virginia and Ruth,
the little girls who
followed me through
the orchard listening
to my tales,
I affectionately
dedicate this book.

BUNNY BEARSKIN

by Guy Winfrey

LITTLE Bunny was having lots of fun playing hide-and-seek with the shadows. He would crouch down behind a log, and watch them scamper over the leaves.



The gentle breeze would wave the limbs about, and the shadows of the leaves would run helter skelter over the ground.

When one of the shadows would touch Bunny, he would jump up and run, and try to touch the tree that the shadow belonged to before another one would touch him.

If he reached the tree first, he would win the game. He thought it was the finest game he had ever played.

He hid right on top of the bank of

the creek, and just then a great big shadow ran up and tickled his nose. He knew the tree that cast it, and ran as fast as he could to get there before

another touched him, but he caught his toe under a stick. He rolled, and rolled, and rolled, until he fell—*splash*—into the water.

He was very lucky, for the water was not deep there. Bunny had not learned to swim, so if he had fallen into the

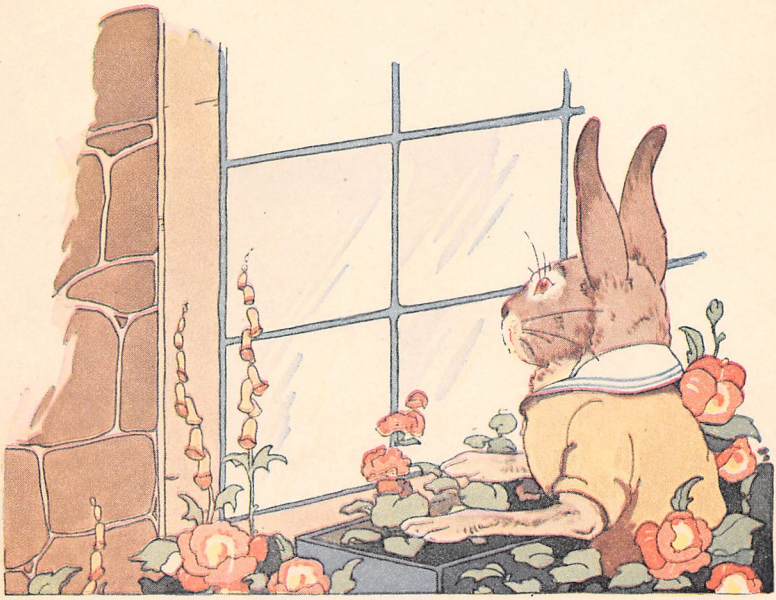
deep water, this story could not have been written. He did not think that he was lucky, for right away he remembered what his mother had told him that morning when he started out to play.

His mother had said "Now, Bunny dear, you have a cold, and you must

be very careful not to get wet. If you get wet and catch more cold I will spank you. Here is a nice clean handkerchief. Now run out and play, but be careful."

So when he fell into the water and got all wet, he took his wet clothes off at once and hung them up to dry.

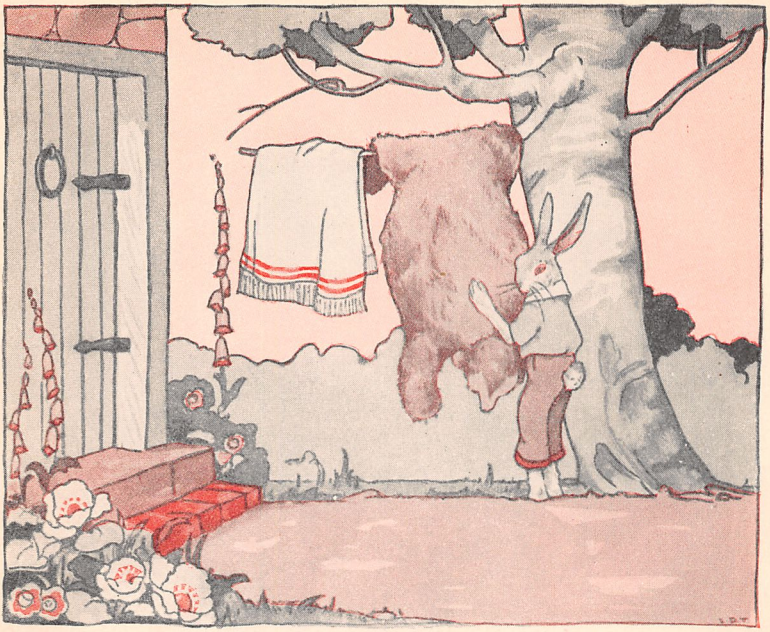
The sun was getting low, so he thought that instead of waiting for his clothes to dry, he would go to Mr. Bear's house and try to borrow some



nice dry things. He knocked on Mr. Bear's door, but no one answered. He went to the window and looked in, but no one was inside.

"What shall I do," thought Bunny. "My clothes will not be dry for a long time."

He looked all around, and what do you think he saw? A nice little bear skin hanging on a limb! Mrs. Bear had brushed her coat and had hung it on the limb and had forgotten to take



it in when she went away. Bunny went and felt it, and it felt so warm and fuzzy that he just had to try it on.

It was a little too large for him, but he tied it around his fat little "tummy", and how nice and warm it felt!

He thought "I will wear it home, and return it afterwards. I am sure Mrs. Bear will not care, and I do not want to catch more cold and be spanked."

L.D.T

So he started home. He had not gone far when he heard a noise ahead of him. There was old Mr. Coon coming down the path!

Mr. Coon is very fond of Rabbits, just as little boys and girls are fond of ice cream.

Bunny was very frightened, but Mr. Coon just looked at him once, and said "OOH, a Bear!" and ran away as fast as he could run! Bunny just sat and stared at him, and wondered what had frightened him so. He did not see a bear.

As soon as the Coon was out of sight, Bunny started home again. His knees were still a little shaky from his fright, but he ran as fast as he could.

Just as he was passing a big thicket of blackberry vines, he heard several sharp savage barks. He knew who was

coming, for he had heard those barks before. His mother had told him all about Mr. Fox, and how little Rabbit boys must always hide when Mr. Fox was near. So he jumped right into those scratchy, stickery blackberry vines! He sat as still as still could be.

Mr. Fox came down the path, and when he was near his nose began to twitch.

"Oho!" said he to himself," a Rabbit! That is fine.

"I need a Rabbit for supper!" So he crept closer and closer to where poor Bunny sat trembling. Soon he would see Bunny, and then—one quick

spring, and he would have a Rabbit for supper!

Bunny was frightened. Just then Mr. Fox's eyes gleamed through the vines. But he did not spring on Bunny! Oh no! Mr. Fox just shouted "OOH, a Bear!" and ran away so fast that Bunny could hardly see him go!

"Well, well," thought Bunny, "I

wonder where the bear is that Mr. Coon and Mr. Fox saw? I have not seen any Bears."

Once more he started home, and just as he came to the edge of the forest, he

heard something that frightened him more than ever. You see, it was almost dark now, and when dark comes, Mr. Owl must go out and get something for Mrs. Owl and the little Owls to eat. Owls do not hunt while the sun is up, for their eyes are made so that

they can see quite well at night, when the other birds and animals can not see so well. That makes it easier for the Owl to catch them.

Old Mr. Owl lived in the tree at the edge of the forest, and was the largest of all the Owls in the Big Woods.

His beak was the largest and strongest, and his claws were the sharpest and longest.

Bunny was passing under the tree just as Mrs. Owl woke Mr. Owl and

told him that the children were awake and wanted their breakfast.

Mr. Owl stretched his wings and opened one eye. Then he stretched his legs and opened the other eye. Then

he looked around.

Right there at his front door, almost, was something that looked very much like a Rabbit. He gave two or three hoots that sounded terrible to Bunny, and came down from the tree just like an arrow! Poor Bunny crouched down to the ground as close as possible, but the Owl had seen him.

Bunny was terribly frightened. He thought, "No use to run, for the Owl can fly faster than I can run.

No use to call for help, for no Rabbit could help me. Oh my! I am afraid that I can not escape THIS time!"

But just as Mr. Owl was about to close his claws on him, he cried "OOH,

a BEAR!, and flew away as fast as he could fly. Bunny sprang up and ran, and ran, and ran, and ran. He did not stop until he was home. He opened the door and just tumbled in.

His mother upset her chair and crawled under it. His brothers hid behind the stove, and his sisters ran down the stairs into the cellar.

His father was so surprised that he

could not see any place to hide. He just dropped down onto his knees and began to beg the Bear not to eat them.

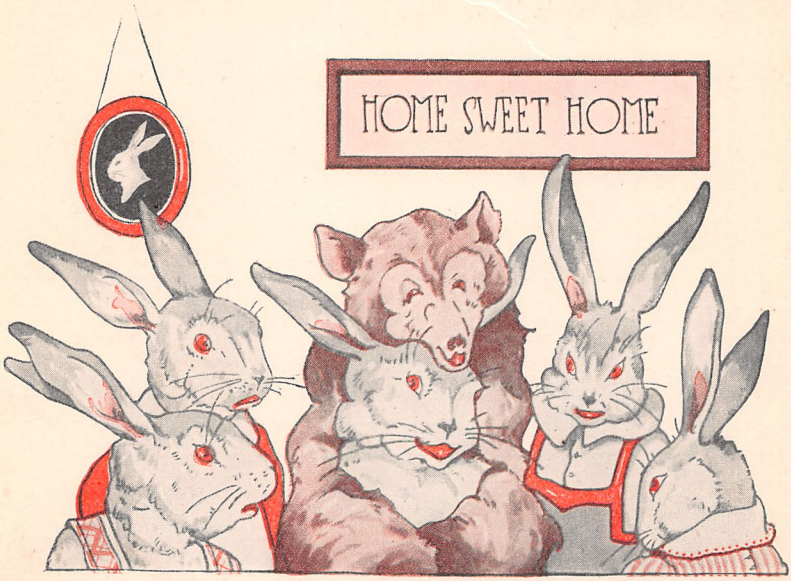
Bunny was puzzled. He looked all around, but he could not see any Bear. What could be the matter with them all? What frightened them so? He scratched his head and wondered.

"What is the matter, mother?" he asked—"Where is the Bear?"

"Why it is Bunny!" his mother said, and crawled from under her chair.

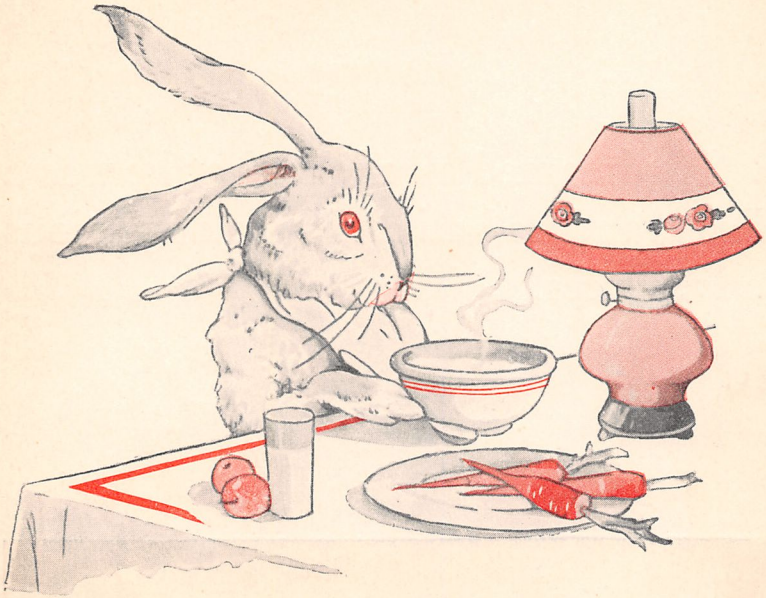
His brothers and sisters came from behind the stove and from the cellar. His father got up from his knees, and they all said, "WE THOUGHT YOU WERE A BEAR!"

Bunny was surprised. He had not realized that Mrs. Bear's coat made him look like a Bear. He told them all about his adventures, and how the



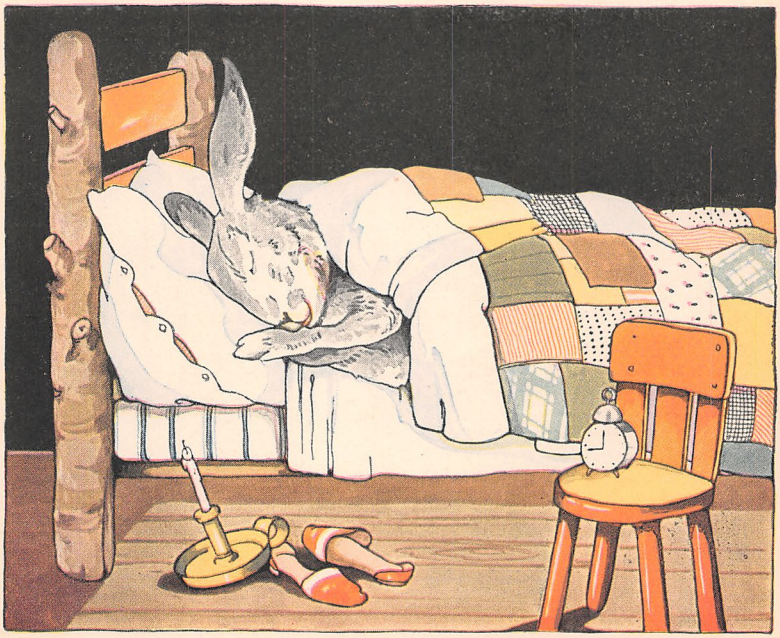
coat had saved his life.

His mother was so thankful that he was safe that she forgot all about the spanking she had promised him if he got wet.



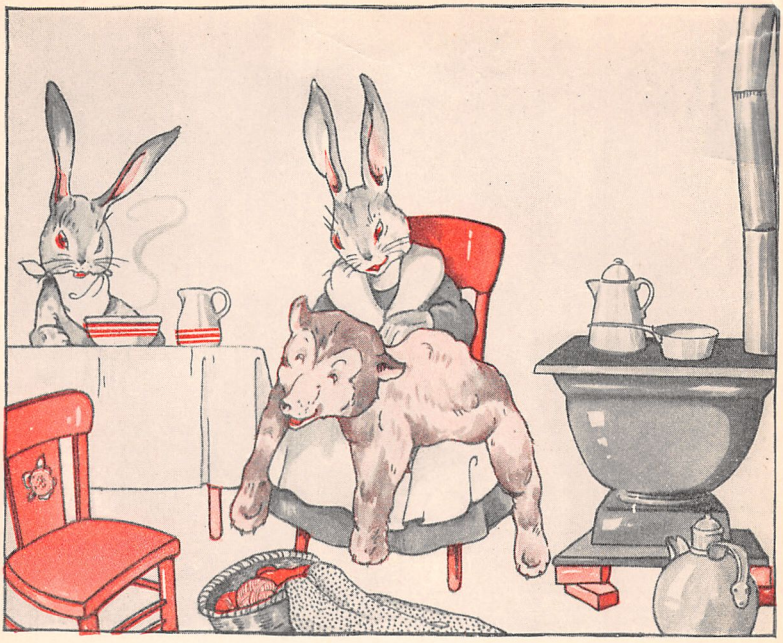
So he sat by the fire and had his supper, and when his mother tucked him into bed, he went to sleep at once, he was so tired.

He dreamed all night that he was a Bear, and he had all kinds of glorious adventures.



When Bunny awoke the next morning, his father had gone to work in the cabbage patch, and all his brothers and sisters had gone out to play. His mother was sewing on the bear-skin coat.

"What are you doing, mother?", he asked. His mother said "I am taking a tuck or two in the coat so it will fit



you better. Then you can go and visit your Cousin Billy, and Aunt Bun and Uncle Rabbit."

"But mother, I only borrowed the

coat, and I think I ought to return it right away," he said. But his mother told him that surely Mrs. Bear would not object if he kept it another day. Besides, she would not cut the coat, and the tucks could be taken out easily. So, when he had had his breakfast, his mother had finished the coat

and he put it on.

"Now do not stop on the way to play," said his mother. "Go directly to Aunt Bun's house, and take your coat off, so you will not get it dirty. Go quickly through the Big Woods, for Mr. Coon lives there, and he might not think that you were a Bear this

time if he sees you. And hurry over the Big Hill, for Mr. Fox lives there. When you get to Aunt Bun's house, be sure to ask about her health; also Uncle Rabbit's. And give them our best regards. I want you to be polite to everyone, for you must remember that you are a member of the oldest

family of Rabbits in Rabbit Town. Start home early. I was very worried about you yesterday when you were late. And you must not play roughly with Billy."

"Alright, mother, kiss me good-bye," said Bunny, and he started up the hill. He had not gone far when he met Billy.

LOUISE
TESSIN

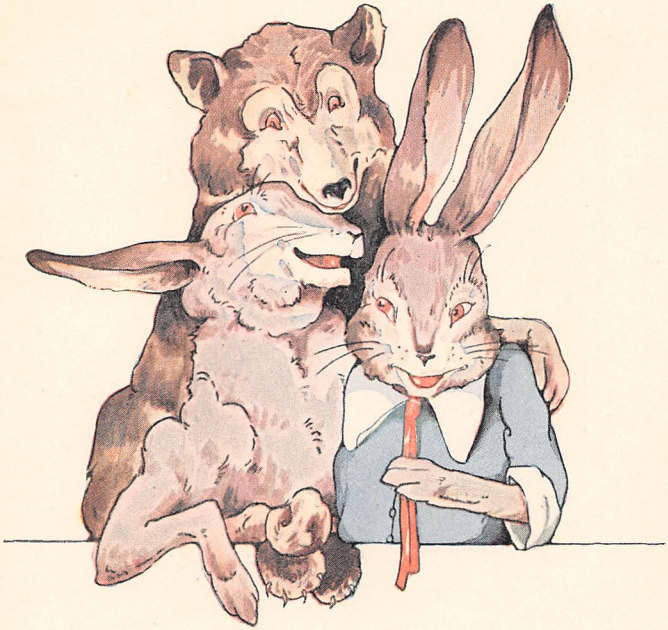
Bunny wanted to tell Billy that he was coming over to see him, and ran toward him. Poor Billy was frightened, and away he went as fast as he could go. Bill ran so fast that Bunny could not get close enough to tell him not to be afraid. He ran until he could run no longer.

When at last he was so exhausted that he fell, Bunny ran up beside him to tell him that he was not really a Bear, but Billy looked so funny that Bunny started laughing.

This made Billy angry, and he said, "How is it, Mr. Bear, that your voice sounds just like a Rabbit's voice?"

Then Bunny said, "Why, Bill, this is your Cousin Bunny! I tried to tell you, but you ran so fast that I could not."

Bill jumped up and said, "I suppose you think it is funny to scare folks half to death. Well, I do not like jokes like that." But when Bunny explained that he was not running after him to



frighten him but to tell him that he was only coming over to play, Billy cheered up at once.

"Well, if you can fool me like that, we can have some fun scaring other folks. As I was coming through Big Woods, I saw Tommy Porcupine and

Joe Woodchuck. Come on, we will have lots of fun! We will hurry down there and scare them. They are afraid of Bears!" So they ran down the hill,

and when they got to the Big Woods, they hid behind a large pine tree. Soon they heard Joe Woodchuck coming. He was old and fat. He was talking

to himself about a beet that he was going to have for dinner.

He said, "Farmer Brown is not at home. I can go into his garden and dig up a nice, big, tender beet."

Just then he heard a sound and looked toward the pine tree. There was

Mr. Bear! My, how Joe Woodchuck ran! He was so fat that he wobbled, but he ran fast just the same!

Bunny and Billy thought that it was very funny, and they rolled over and over on the ground in laughter. All at once Billy bounded up into the air and began to run and yell. Bunny

did not know what was the matter with him, and ran after him. When he caught Billy, he found that Billy had sat on a bee.

Bunny pulled the stinger out, and bound some leaves around the wound to keep it from swelling. "It will be alright soon," said Bunny. They do not hurt very long," but Billy said "No bee can sting me like that and not be punished. I am going to find the Bee and kill it."

So they started back, and soon they

saw the Bee flying home. They ran after it, and saw it go into a hive.

Billy said, "Come on, we can catch it now!" He ran up to the hive and pounded on the door. "Come out, you Bee, come out!" said Billy.

Out came the Bee, and about a million more.

"Oh my!" said Bunny, "these are too many Bees for us! Let's run!"

But Billy had already gone! Poor Bunny ran as fast as he could, but the

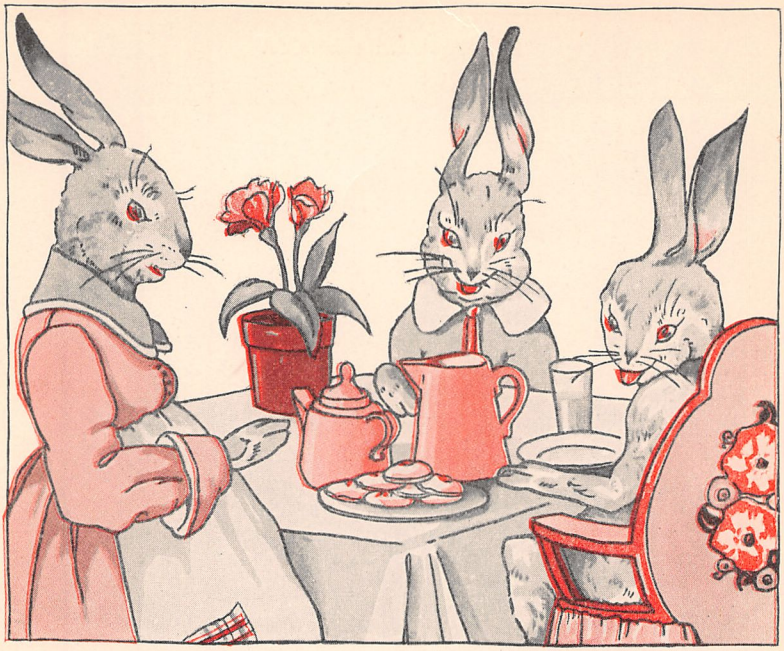
Bees could fly fast, and he was stung many times.

When he overtook Billy, who had started to run sooner than he had, and so had not been stung so often, he was angry. "Is that how you kill Bees?" asked Bunny. "Oh yes," said Billy, that is the way I kill them. I run them to death!"

This spoiled the day's sport for them, for Bee-stings hurt! They went to Billy's house to get Aunt Bun to pull the stingers out. They decided that Bunny should take his coat off and hide it, so Aunt Bun would not be frightened.

Aunt Bun was very glad to see

Bunny, and she pulled the stingers out of them both, and put some bread and milk poultices on the wounds so they would not hurt so badly, and to keep them from swelling. Then she gave each of them three cookies and a glass of milk.



Aunt Bun wanted to know all the news from Bunny's home, and he told her all his mother had instructed him to, and was very polite. He asked

about her health, and Uncle Rabbit's health, and said he hoped that all of Billy's little brothers and sisters, whose eyes were not open yet, were well.

Then when Aunt Bun asked them what they had been doing, they told her about the wonderful Bear-skin coat that Bunny had, and of the won-

derful fun they had, scaring folks. But, they said, the Bees did not seem a bit afraid of it.

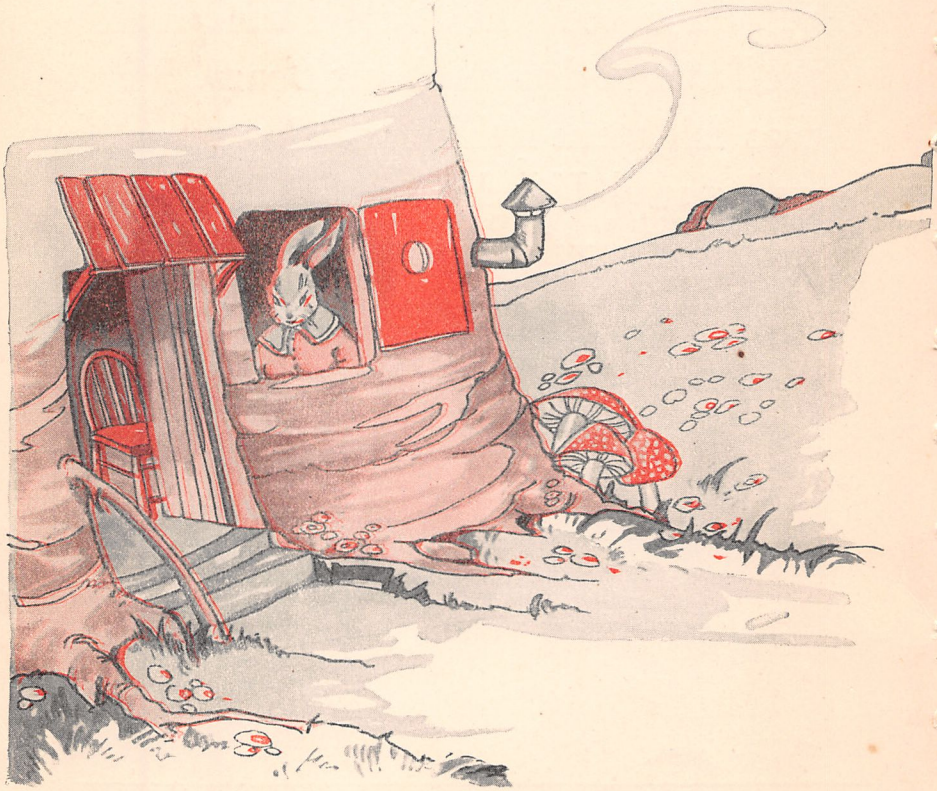
Aunt Bun wanted to see the coat, so Bunny went out and got it.

"Oh my, what a pretty coat!" cried Aunt Bun. "That would make a lovely bed for the little Rabbits! I wonder if I could get some Bear-skin to make

a bed?"

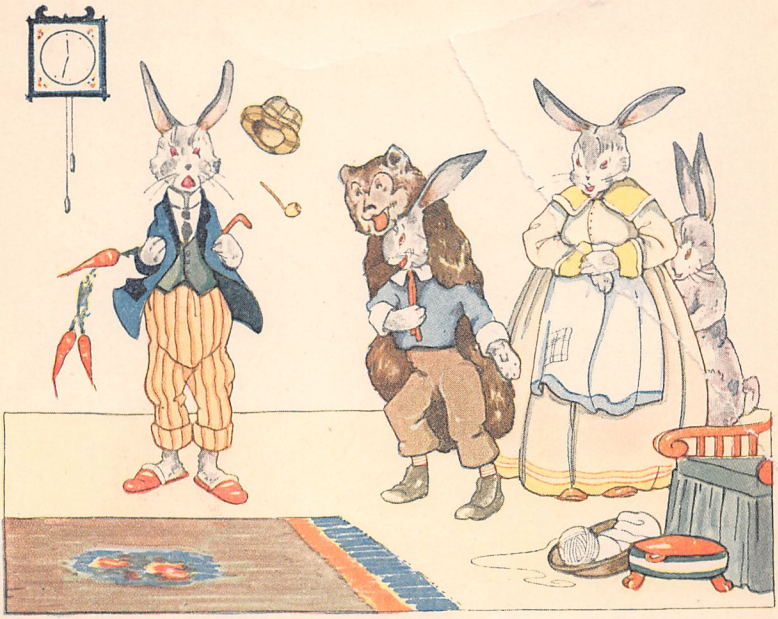
"Oh no, mama, I would not like to sleep on a bed like that! I am afraid that I would dream about Bears! My! I was frightened this morning when I saw Bunny! If I dreamed a Bear was after me, I would not walk in my sleep —I would run!"

Aunt Bun looked out of the window. She saw Uncle Rabbit coming. "Quick! put the coat on and we will frighten Uncle Rabbit! I want to have



some fun, too!" said Aunt Bun.

Bunny sprang up to get the coat, but Billy said, "Oh let me—it is my turn now! Let me scare him please!"



So Bunny let him take the coat. Billy put the coat on, and stood in the middle of the room, looking very fierce.

Uncle Rabbit opened the door and came in. It was very sun-shiny outside, and the room was very cool and shady. Uncle Rabbit could not see very well at first. He closed the door and looked around. There, right in the middle of the room, was a Bear! Poor Uncle Rabbit was very frightened. His

knees began to tremble, and he cried "OOH! a Bear!" Then he sprang to the fire-place, and scuttled up the chimney! He was very lucky that there was no fire in the fire place. He might have burned his feet, or scorched his fur.

They laughed, and laughed, and

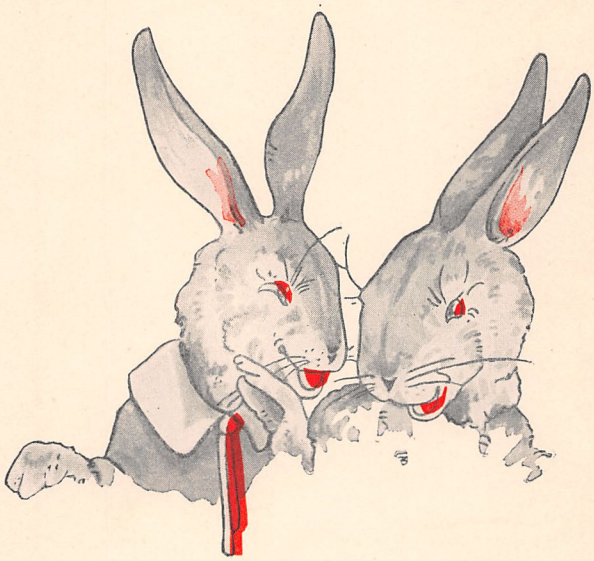
laughed! When Uncle Rabbit heard them laughing, he realized it was a joke, but he was very angry. He did not like that kind of a joke.

He slid down from the chimney and boxed Aunt Bun's ears. Then he said to Billy, "Get me the strap, you young

rascal! I will teach you that you must not frighten your father. It does not show the proper respect, and besides I do not like jokes unless I play them myself."

Billy got the strap, and his father thrashed him. Billy cried and cried,

but when his father went out of the room, he whispered to Bunny "it did

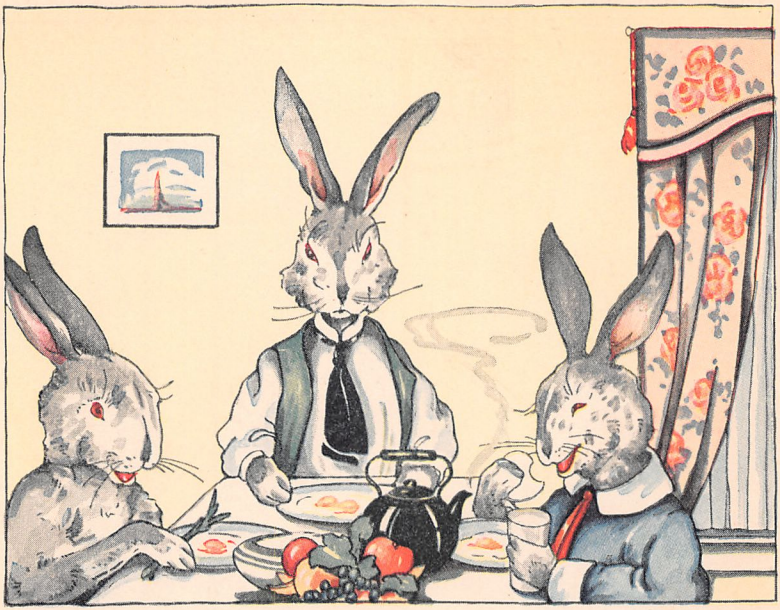


not hurt a bit! He spanked me on the poultice, and that bread and milk is soft! But I always cry, for then he thinks he is doing a better job."

Then they all had dinner. Aunt Bun

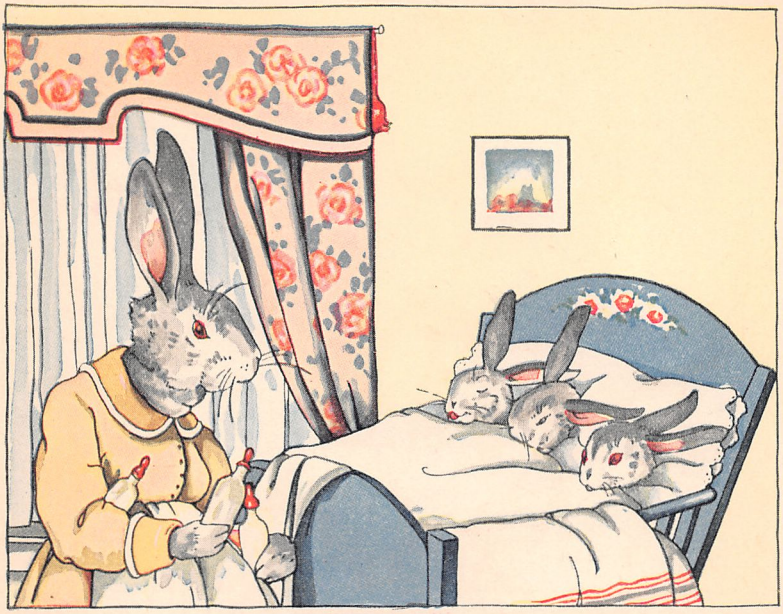
was known to be the best cook in Rabbitland, and Bunny always liked to have dinner at Billy's, because Aunt Bun always cooked such nice things.

But Uncle Rabbit still was angry. As soon as dinner was over, he said to Bunny, "You had better go home



now, Bunny. When you and Billy get together you always get into mischief. You also deserve a spanking."

So Bunny said "Alright, Uncle Rabbit, I will go home. Good-bye, Aunt



Bun; good-bye Billy and Uncle Rabbit." He took his coat and put it on, and started home.

He felt fine for he had had a very

nice time, and his bee stings did not hurt any more. He walked along, stopping here and there to pick some flowers, and he whistled the gayest

tune he knew. Then he ran for a while, and skipped some. Then he thought how funny Uncle looked scuttling up the chimney, and he had to sit down and laugh.

He was more than half-way home when he heard a noise in a tree just above his head, and when he looked

up, there was Mr. Bear himself scowling down at him!

Ooh! said Mr. Bear, "you are the fellow who took my wife's coat! She

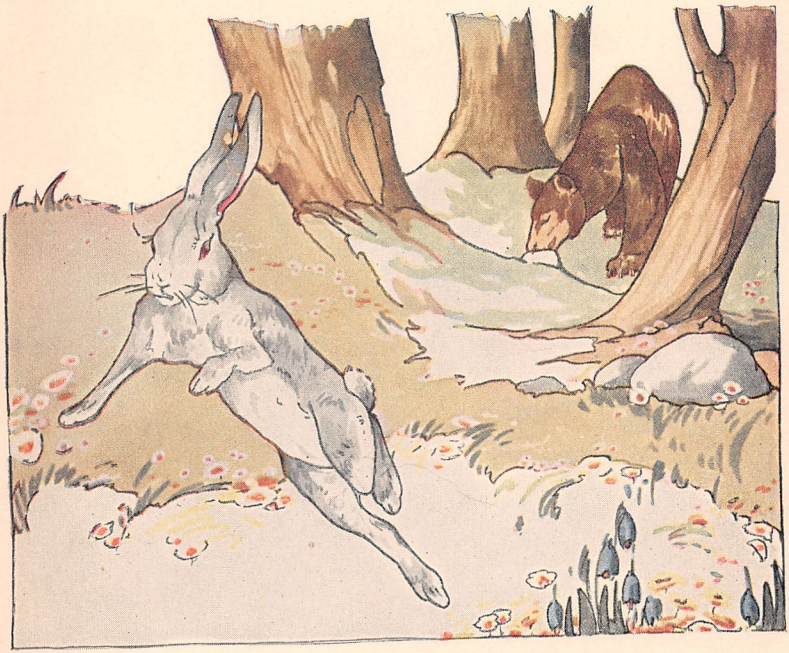
has been crying and squealing ever since we came home and found her coat gone."

"Oh Mr. Bear, I only borrowed the coat because I fell into the creek and got my clothes all wet," said Bunny.

"I call that stealing," said Mr. Bear. "Give me that coat or I will tear you limb from limb!"

"Oh yes, Mr. Bear, I will, and I will pay you for the use of it, too! Here is some lovely bread-and-milk!" He dropped the coat and the poultice, which he did not need any longer anyway, and then he ran, and ran, and ran! He knew that Bears are very fond of bread-and-milk. While Mr. Bear

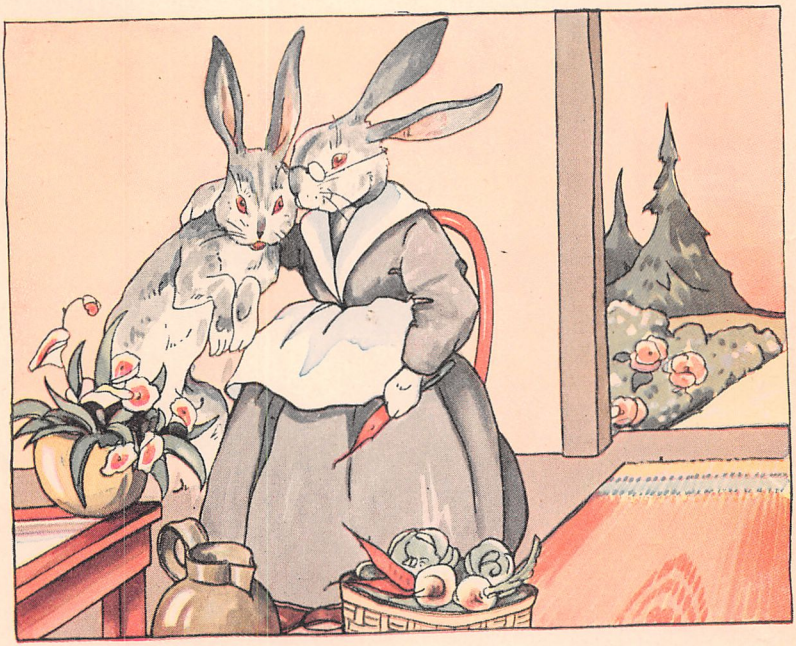
ate the poultice, Bunny ran home and did not stop until he was in his mother's arms.



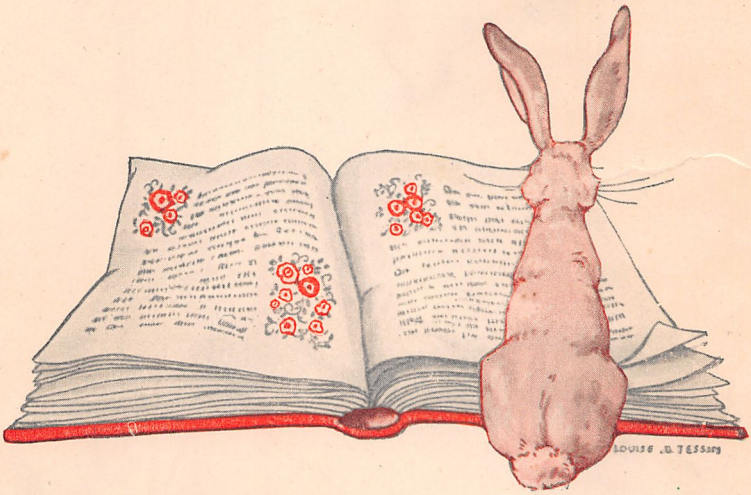
He was very frightened. He told his mother that he had seen Mr. Bear, and had returned the coat to him. His mother asked if he had thanked Mr. Bear for the use of it, and Bunny said that they had other things to talk about, and that he was afraid

that he had forgotten to thank Mr. Bear.

"I do not want to play Bear any more, mother. I had rather just be



your little Bunny Boy," he said, and he snuggled up to her and kissed her.


LOUISE D. TESSIN

BEARSKIN